



## WOUNDED WARRIOR

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#### Send your comments, feedback

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## AFPC commander sends holiday message to all wounded warriors

*As we enter another holiday season and approach the New Year, I take great pleasure in sending this holiday message to you and your family. On behalf of the entire Air Force Wounded Warrior Program staff and Air Force Personnel Center team, I thank you for your service and the sacrifices you and your family have made to our nation.*

*This coming year brings great promise for the future and our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the Airmen, and their families, who are protecting our freedoms far from home this holiday season.*

*As our nation continues to face unprecedented challenges, the Air Force will continue to make you and your family a high priority in all we do. The Air Force Wounded Warrior Program's motto "Care Beyond Duty" is more than a slogan -- it's our living mandate and commitment to you.*



*May this season bring you and your family real joy and peace, and may the coming year be overflowing with all the good things in life. Areetha and I look forward to our continued partnership in your recovery and feel honored to be part of your Air Force family.*

**Maj. Gen. Alfred J. Stewart**  
Commander, Air Force  
Personnel Center



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## Stopping by for a visit after a Combat Breakfast

After a Combat Breakfast at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, on Nov. 8, care manager Gina Hinojosa (left) posed for a picture with former Senior Airman Christopher Kai, his wife, Amanda, and their children, Victoria and T.J., outside the Warrior and Family Operations Center. The breakfast was hosted by the Alamo Chapter of the Air Force Association. (U.S. Air Force photo/Scott Hand)



## Wounded warriors are always welcome at operations center

After a Combat Breakfast at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, on Nov. 8, Brian Churchill (left) posed for a picture with Senior Airman Michael Malarsie and his service dog, Xxon, and care manager Fred Zeithammel outside the Warrior and Family Operations Center. The breakfast was hosted by the Alamo Chapter of the Air Force Association. (U.S. Air Force photo/Scott Hand)

## AFW2s attend special event in New York

Seven Air Force wounded warriors and their caregivers traveled to New York City in early November to attend the Stand Up For Heroes event sponsored by the Bob Woodruff Foundation.

The four-day event was mainly to pamper caregivers and honor wounded warriors. Activities kicked off with a meet-and-greet on the first evening, followed by a private party on the second night at a premier venue. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz was on hand to speak personally with each Air Force wounded warrior.

Air Force attendees included retired Tech. Sgt. Tom Marcum and his wife, April; Senior Airman August O'Niell and his wife, Shannon; retired Staff Sgt. Nick Bradley and his girlfriend, Amanda; retired Tech. Sgt. Dave Romanowsky and his wife, Gayla; Tech. Sgt. Cory Kemp and his wife, Tara; retired Capt. Therese Frentz and her mother; and Master Sgt. Frank Reilly and his wife, Heather.

Also attending were three AFW2 advocates: Candace Escobedo, an Air Force Wounded Warrior Program care manager; Mark Gilliard, a recovery care coordinator; and Maj. Michael Wyatt, Air Force Warrior and Survivor Care.

On the third night, a fundraiser and a special Stand Up For Heroes comedy show was held at the Beacon Theater. The evening began with a meet-and-greet with Bob Woodruff and his staff as well as other high-level dignitaries. The night



(From left) Bob Woodruff, co-founder of the Bob Woodruff Foundation; retired Tech. Sgt. Wayne Marcum, an Air Force wounded warrior; Candace Escobedo, an Air Force Wounded Warrior Program care manager; and retired Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr., former Army chief of staff. All were among the attendees at fifth annual Stand Up for Heroes 2011 benefit in New York City. (Courtesy photo)

was filled with music and comedy, including a performance by Bruce Springsteen as well as a guest appearance by President Bill Clinton as the opening act. Audience members pledged nearly \$400,000 in donations during the fundraiser.

On the last morning of the whirlwind trip, the Air Force entourage visited ABC studios and were able to meet with news reporter Robin Roberts and do a quick appearance on the "Good Morning America" show.

For more information on Stand Up for Heroes and the Bob Woodruff Foundation, visit <http://remind.org/>.

## IDES program reduces disability benefit wait time

By Eric M. Grill  
Air Force Personnel, Service and  
Manpower Public Affairs

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas – The Air Force held a training conference recently to teach those operating the Integrated Disability Evaluation System how to process service members who, because of medical conditions, may no longer be able to serve in the Air Force.

The conference, held jointly between the Air Force Personnel Center and the Air Force Medical Operations

Agency, was attended by more than 250 base-level physical evaluation board liaison officers, who guide service members through the disability evaluation system, and medical physicians, who recommend service members for the disability evaluation process.

The Integrated Disability Evaluation System, or IDES, combines the military services' disability evaluation and that of the Department of Veterans Affairs benefits claims processes into a streamlined process to minimize the gap between service separation and

VA benefits delivery. The program was introduced in 2007 as a pilot program at three military bases and steadily expanded to full Defense Department-wide implementation at the end of September.

The IDES provides a more seamless transition to veteran disability benefits with more consistent ratings between Defense and VA than the previous system, said Lt. Col. Lorianne Hodge, Air Force Personnel Center's USAF Physical Disability Division

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## Services and Resources

[Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities](#) includes a one-month online portion followed by a 10-day intensive boot camp for business startups at one of the participating universities. All expenses are paid by the program. Once completed, individuals are mentored for one year. The program is designed to open the door to business ownership for our veterans by 1) developing your skills in the many steps and activities associated with launching and growing a small business, and by 2) helping you leverage programs and services for veterans and people with disabilities in a way that furthers your entrepreneurial dreams.



The Department of Veterans Affairs recently launched [VA for Vets](#), a program that takes a high-tech and high-touch approach to recruiting, hiring, retaining, and reintegrating veterans into the VA workforce. As part of its high-tech solution, the program offers state-of-the-art online tools for veterans as they seek employment or look to further career development opportunities.

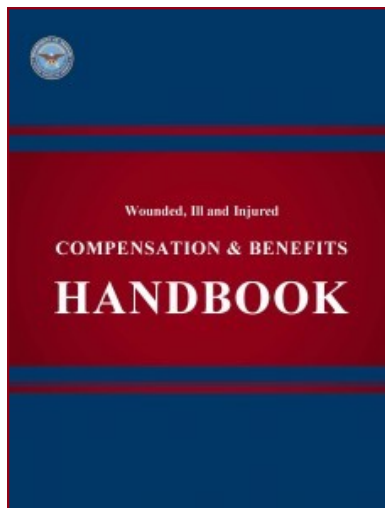
A new website, [VeteransCentral](#), is available to connect veterans to their local communities (local peer support); inform them of local, federal, and state policies and programs; and provide a vehicle to post rich virtual resumes and find local jobs. The site's content centers will provide a platform for local veterans service organizations, government support programs, and other tools to get current and new information out to veterans.

The [GI Rights Hotline](#), 877-447-4487, uses trained civilian counselors to provide counseling and information on military discharges, absent without leave and unauthorized absence, and GI Rights. It includes both a national program and local hotline branches around the country.

## New compensation, benefits handbook available

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Defense recently published the 2011 DOD Compensation and Benefits Handbook, a comprehensive resource guide describing compensation and other benefits service members and their families would be entitled to upon separation or retirement as a result of serious injury or illness.

"The intent of the handbook is to give seriously ill and injured service members and their families a quick reference guide to information, covering everything they may need during recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration," said John R. Campbell, deputy assistant secretary of defense for the



Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy.

The handbook was designed to answer questions in the order in which they are most likely to arise, including chapters on:

- Recovery resources
- Medical care
- DOD pay and allowances
- Disability Evaluation System
- Compensation and benefits
- Reintegration into civilian life

The handbook was compiled in cooperation with the Departments of Veterans Affairs; Labor; Health and Human Services; and Education, plus the Social Security Administration, along with the military services. It also provides references to assistance provided by other governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations.

Many of the answers to specific questions will depend on the service member's

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## Upcoming events

**Soldiers to the Summit**, or S2S, is seeking wounded warriors for a summit climb of Cotopaxi, a spectacular 19,347-foot mountain in Ecuador, in early December 2012. The commitment begins next year with at least two training trips in Colorado during the spring and fall. If selected, all group travel expenses and equipment will be provided; however, this is not just a free adventure. Commitment is essential, and the S2S program requires wounded warriors to make significant contributions. You will be required to attend several training sessions, you may be asked to travel and speak to sponsor organizations, lead workshops at rehab hospitals, schools or disability programs, and become a mentor for future participants. This is a physically demanding program and although no prior climbing experience is required, good fitness is essential. Application deadline is Feb. 17. For more information and to apply, contact program director Charley Mace by email at [cm@soldierstothetsummit.org](mailto:cm@soldierstothetsummit.org). Learn more at the S2S website or visit [www.facebook.com/SoldierstotheSummit](http://www.facebook.com/SoldierstotheSummit).



The **Alamo Chapter of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association** invites wounded warriors to dress for success and bring their resumes to a two-day job fair at Westin La Cantera in San Antonio. The job fairs takes place Dec. 14, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., and Dec. 15, 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. Approximately 20 organizations from the Department of Defense, and various government and commercial industries are scheduled to attend. There will be on-site interviews with companies looking to hire now, and people can learn how to network to find a job.

The **National Sports Center for the Disabled** offers a ski and snowboard program in Denver for individuals of any age who have served in the U.S. military and now have a disability and want to learn to ski or snowboard, or improve existing skills. Session I is set for: Jan. 8, 22, 29, and Feb 5 and 12. Session II is set for Feb. 26, and March 4, 11, 18 and 25. Rates are: \$205 per person for the five-week alpine ski or snowboard session; \$164 per person for the five-week Nordic ski and snowboard lesson, or partial-day cross-country ski and snowshoe lesson, lift ticket, equipment and transportation. Also in Denver, join forces with military men and women with disabilities who have served the nation. A two-day event is facilitated by a staff that includes U.S. military veterans. Both women and men are welcome. Evening activities are also planned. Session 1 takes place 1 p.m. Jan 31 through noon Feb 1. Transportation to and from Denver International Airport or metro-area sites, activity fees, instruction and equipment, lodging and meals are included for free. Call 970-726-1540 for more information. Registration deadline is Jan 10.

## Do you need to update your contact information?

**NOTE - Updates should be provided to: AFW2 Program Office, AFPC Disabilities Branch, DEERS, DFAS, and the VA.**

AFW2 Program Office – Call **800-581-9437** or via email: [wounded.warrior@us.af.mil](mailto:wounded.warrior@us.af.mil)

AFPC Disabilities Branch for people on the Temporary Disability Retired List – Email [disability@us.af.mil](mailto:disability@us.af.mil)

DEERS – Updating info in DEERS is accomplished in one of three ways:  
Call **800-538-9552**

Visit a military base ID card issuance facility

Visit the website at: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe/indexAction.do>

DFAS – Online at “myPay” website: <https://mypay.dfas.mil>

VA – Call **800-827-1000** or visit their website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for the nearest VA office

